U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Accomplishment Report

The **Alpena Fishery Resources Office (FRO)** is located in Alpena, Michigan and works to meet U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fishery and Ecosystem goals within Lake Huron, Western Lake Erie, and connecting waters of the St. Marys River, St. Clair River, and Detroit River. Activities include Aquatic Species Conservation and Management, Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management, Cooperation with Native Americans, Leadership in Science and Technology, Partnerships and Accountability, Public Use, and Workforce Management – all of which are conducted in alignment with the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future. The station is one of many field offices located within Region 3, the Great Lakes Big Rivers Region.

Aquatic Species Conservation and Management

New Sampling Techniques Used to Collect Juvenile Lake Sturgeon in the St. Clair System

Submitted by James Boase
Fishery Biologist

With funding provided by DTE Energy biologists from Alpena FRO and Michigan DNR Lake St. Clair Research Station purchased and tested trammel nets and gillnets in the St. Clair System. Trammel nets have been successfully used by commercial fishers and biologists in large rivers like the Mississippi and Missouri. They have been used for many years to capture, virtually unharmed, a wide variety of species and sizes of fish.

Photo credit - M. Thomas, MDNR

Trammel nets can best be described as a small mesh gillnet sandwiched between two large mesh gillnets. However, unlike gillnets trammel nets do not typically gill the fish instead fish get caught in a pocket that is formed by the smaller inner mesh as they try to swim through. The trammel nets we used were 30 meters in length, had a 2.5 cm inch inner mesh surrounded by 20 cm outer panels. The nets can be fished in a number of ways such as anchoring or allowing the nets to drift with the current. Gill nets used in this survey were 120 meters in length and had a mesh size of 5.6 cm mesh size. With this pilot study we drifted the trammel nets in the river and used anchors while fishing the gillnets. We fished gillnets in the delta region of the river where water velocities were lower.

The goal of this demonstration effort was to collect juvenile lake sturgeon that were less than three years old. During the past decade efforts to collect young sturgeon in the St. Clair River have utilized setlines with smaller hooks. After nine years of sampling less than 25 juvenile lake sturgeon have been captured with no young-of-year lake sturgeon captured.

Our first attempts using trammel nets in August managed to capture only one adult lake sturgeon in 15 transects. We found that the net was susceptible to snagging on clusters of zebra mussels and other debris located on the river bottom. By the end of August a concurrent effort by researchers from Alpena FRO and USGS Great Lakes Science Center (GLSC) had completed a substrate survey of the St. Clair River using Side-scan sonar. The Side-scan information enabled biologists to avoid most snag hazards in a second survey with the trammel nets and as a result four lake sturgeon ages two and three were captured. Fishing in the delta region of the river resulted in the capture of three lake sturgeon ages zero, one and two.

Interestingly, the four lake sturgeon captured in the river were within 20 meters of a juvenile sturgeon that had previously been implanted with a sonic tag and had been located earlier on the same day. It is not fully understood if juvenile lake sturgeon move in schools or if limitations in certain habitat parameters cause juveniles to congregate together. Repeated attempts to recapture the implanted juvenile were unsuccessful. Capture of the implanted fish would have enabled biologist to check the health of the fish since its release in June 2005.

This sampling effort allowed researchers from various agencies to share information about different sampling techniques. Our goal is to continue working with our partners from the GLSC, Michigan DNR, along with corporate sponsors, to continue to test new sampling techniques in our effort to better understand the basic habitat needs of lake sturgeon in this system.

This collaborative effort provided an excellent opportunity to interact with biologists from other agencies and to explain the Service's mission and efforts to assist in management of Great Lakes fisheries. Specifically, information was provided about the efforts of the Service and its partners to rehabilitate native lake sturgeon populations in the Great Lakes and the role that the Fishery Resources Offices have in this endeavor. This project supports the “Partnerships and Accountability” and “Aquatic Species Conservation and Management” priorities of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Biologist Presents Results of Lake Trout Tagging Studies at the Region 3 Fish Culture Meeting

Submitted by Aaron Woldt
Fishery Biologist

Fishery Biologist Aaron Woldt of the Alpena FRO attended the Region 3 Fish Culture meeting on December 13 and gave 2 presentations summarizing results from the Lake Huron Enhanced Quality at Release Study and the Lake Huron Lake Trout Movement Study.

The Enhanced Quality Study compared coded-wire-tag (CWT) returns of standard and enhanced quality Lewis Lake strain lake trout yearlings reared at Jordan River National Fish Hatchery (NFH). For this study, paired plantings of standard quality (approx. 20 per pound) and enhanced quality (approx. 10 per pound) CWT lake trout were planted at each of four sites—Adams Point, Middle Island, Sturgeon Point, and Point Au Barques—in both 1996 (1995 year class) and 1998 (1997 year class). For each year class, approximately 30,000 standard quality and 30,000 enhanced quality lake trout yearlings were planted at each stocking site. Since 1996, these CWT lake trout have been captured in survey, commercial (gill-net and trap-net), and recreational gears. Woldt showed two types of analyses: 1) an effort independent analysis using Chi Square methods to analyze returns from all sources and 2) an effort dependent analysis using the Wilcoxon Test for Matched Pairs to analyze only survey caught fish. Both analyses used return data through 2004. Overall, the results of the Lake Huron study using either analysis technique showed that the enhanced quality fish survived significantly better than the standard quality fish, although significant differences in survival were not detected for each site and each year class using the Wilcoxon Test for Matched Pairs. In general, enhanced quality fish survived 62% better than the standard quality fish in Lake Huron.

The Lake Trout Movement Study compared CWT returns of lake trout yearlings stocked at 8 discrete movement sites across the lake. For this study, four year classes of lake trout (1991, 1993, 1995, 1997) were planted at Adams Point in MH-1, Middle Island in MH-2, Sturgeon Point in MH-3, and Point Au Barques in MH-4. Four additional year classes (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004) were subsequently stocked at each of the four original sites and a new site off Point Clark in Canadian waters. CWT lake trout have been stocked annually in the Drummond Island Refuge in MH-1 since 1985 and in the mid-lake Six Fathom Bank Refuge since from 1985 to 1998. Two year classes (1999, 2000) of CWT lake trout were also planted on Yankee Reef (mid-lake). Over the course of the study, there have been 1,276 returns of Adams Point fish, 1,076 returns of Middle Island fish, 1,088 returns of Sturgeon Point fish, 1,275 returns of Point Au Barques fish, 5,049 returns of Drummond Island fish, 5,443 returns of Six Fathom Bank fish, 68 returns of Yankee Reef fish, and 0 returns of Point Clark fish in agency surveys, commercial fishing gear, and the recreational fisheries (all gears combined). Woldt adjusted returns in survey gill nets and large mesh commercial gill nets for effort and estimated dispersal radii with standard errors and directions for the 4 nearshore stocking sites. Analysis of CWT returns in the refuge and mid-lake sites is incomplete at this time. On average, lake trout ranged 21.8 ± 1.4 mi from Adams Point, 27.6 ± 1.8 mi from Middle Island, 32.3 ± 2.2 mi from Sturgeon Point, and 24.0 ± 2.9 mi from Point Au Barques. In general lake trout moved large distances at early ages with some fish moving 100 miles or more by age 2 and generally moved in an onshore direction. Only fish from Adams Point (increasing) and Point Au Barques (decreasing) showed statistically significant trends in distance moved by fish age. Ongoing analyses includes fitting returns per effort at each site using an exponential sigmoid model to estimate lake trout home range, completing effort adjustments for the refuge and mid-lake sites, comparing movement patterns by strain for the Drummond Island and Six Fathom Bank sites, and a deeper analysis of differential movement by year class at each site.

Evaluating the survival and movement tendencies of hatchery produced lake trout allows managers to better support lake trout restoration efforts by providing the best quality hatchery product possible and better manage harvest of lake trout based on movement among management units. These outcomes are consistent with the Service's goal of building and

maintaining self-sustaining populations of native fish species under the "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management" priority of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Temperature Depth Recorder Recovered From Lake Sturgeon

Submitted by James Boase
Fishery Biologist


Photo credit – R. Purdy

On November 21, Fishery Biologist James Boase from Alpena FRO working with Biologist Ray Argyle from USGS Great Lakes Science Center in Ann Arbor Michigan were able to extract another temperature depth recorder form a lake sturgeon captured by Purdy Fisheries Ltd. In the spring of 2002 twenty, mostly adult lake sturgeon, were implanted with the recording devices and released in southern Lake Huron. The procedure was repeated again in 2003 with twenty more lake sturgeon implanted. Since 2002 four lake sturgeon have been recaptured and all four recorders have been recovered and downloaded.

The research project is the work of biologists from Ashland FRO and USGS in Ann Arbor. Alpena's involvement has been to provide technical support first during implantation phase of the project and more recently during the recovery of the recorders. The recorders that were implanted in the lake sturgeon back in 2002 and 2003 have been collecting information about the temperature and depth of each fish as it moved freely around the Great Lakes. Batteries in the recorders were designed to record information for three years. During that active period the information about temperature and depth gets permanently stored in the memory of the recorder. Researchers anticipated the recovery of only 10% of the recorders and so far four recorders have been recovered. Information recovered from those four fish seems to indicate that lake sturgeon spend most of their time in relatively shallow areas of the Great Lakes.

In addition to each fish having a recorder, all of the fish are marked with two external Floy tags and an internal PIT tag. The purpose of the tags is to allow the fish to be identified if captured by a commercial or recreational angler. The Floy tags identify that there is a reward for capture of the fish and also provides a phone number and a number to identify the individual fish. The internal PIT tags provide a unique number but no contact information. It is injected under the skin of the fish and can only be read by an electronic reader. Three of the four lake sturgeon recovered have been captured by Purdy Fisheries. The latest fish captured was one of the juvenile fish implanted and not large enough for legal harvest. After the tag was extracted the fish was sutured and after a thirty minute recovery period in the raceway the fish was released in

the headwaters of the St. Clair River. The fish was healthy having gained a few pounds and grown a few inches since its initial release in the spring of 2003.

This effort is just one example of the Service working with states, other federal agencies, and non government organizations to achieve common Great Lakes management objectives. Maintaining these collaborative relationships allows for the most efficient use of limited human and fiscal resources, ultimately resulting in faster restoration of lake sturgeon in the Great Lakes.

This collaborative project provided an opportunity for the Service to expand its network of both governmental and non-governmental partners. Working with other governmental agencies and commercial fishers has been beneficial in aiding the ongoing lake sturgeon research that the Alpena FRO is currently involved with in the St. Clair River. Maintaining and the continued expansion of these networks is key to the success of the overall interagency effort in restoring lake sturgeon throughout the Great Lakes basin and is consistent with the Service's Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priorities for "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management" and "Leadership in Science and Technology".

Final Report Provided on Study to Examine Round Goby Predation on Lake Trout Eggs

Submitted by Anjanette Bowen
Fishery Biologist

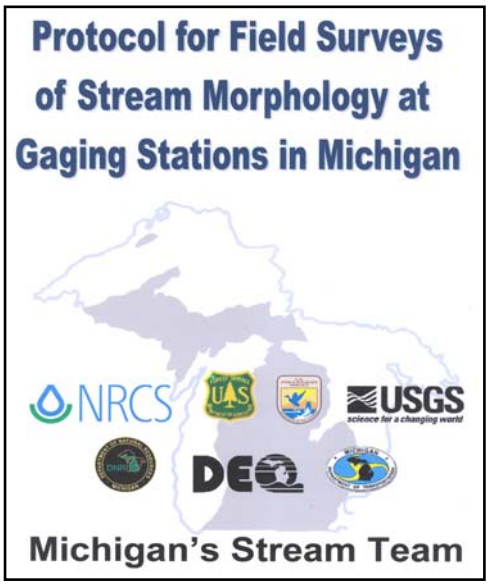

Photo credit-A.Bowen, USFWS

Alpena FRO submitted a final report to the USEPA Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO) on a study conducted to examine predation of invasive round goby on lake trout eggs at a historical spawning reef in northern Lake Huron. The goby is likely a threat to lake trout restoration efforts due to their widespread abundance and predatory nature. Trap-lines and set-lines were used to catch round goby from Mischley Reef in Thunder Bay from May to October in 2002 and 2003 and in October 2004. Diets were documented for 421 round goby collected in October. Lake trout eggs were detected in the diet of round goby captured from the reef each year, but they were uncommon. Dreissenids were the most abundant prey item found. Although lake trout eggs comprised a small portion of the diet of round goby captured during this study, we continue to believe that round goby may impact lake trout reproduction and that more information is needed. Submission of this final report completes the Alpena FRO requirements for this GLNPO grant.

The Service is committed to promoting healthy native fish communities by combating invasive species within the Great Lakes. This project addresses the "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management" and "Partnerships and Accountability" priorities of the Service's Fishery Vision for the Future.

Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management

Michigan Stream Team



Submitted by Susan Wells
Fishery Biologist

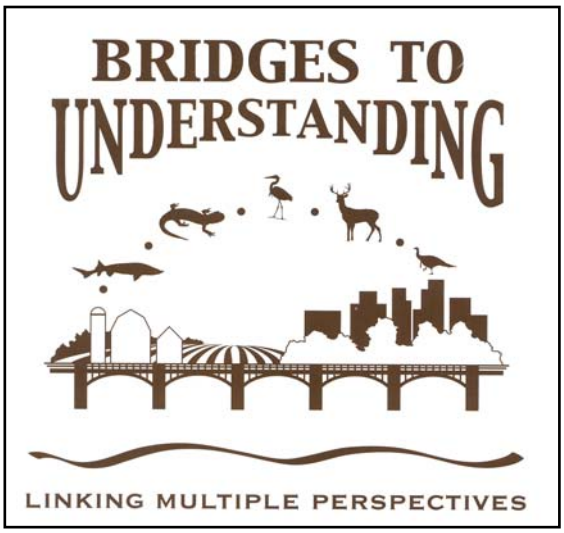
On December 7, Biologists Wells and Enterline participated in a Michigan Stream Team meeting. Representatives of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), U. S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U. S. Forest Service (USFS), and U. S. Geological Survey (USGS) compose the Michigan Stream Team. The Stream Team was formed in 2003 to develop statewide regional curves, where appropriate gage data are available, based on relationships of hydrologic parameters. The long term goal of the Michigan Stream Team is to provide those involved in stream restoration efforts a tool to improve restoration design and minimize disturbances to steam channels and their associated floodplains and wetlands.

The meeting was convened to discuss hiring of a person to conduct the majority of the surveying needed to calculate regional curves in Michigan. The group decided to work through the USGS and hire a graduate student. Approval from MDEQ, who will be supplying the start money for this project, is needed before moving forward with the selection of a graduate student. Final revisions for the *Protocol for Field Surveys of Stream Morphology at Gaging Stations in Michigan*, a document compiled by the Michigan Stream Team to standardize methods used for surveying stream segments, were discussed and the document will be ready for public use by mid January. The next Stream Team meeting was scheduled for January 25, 2006 in East Lansing Michigan.

This project works with the Michigan Stream Team to address the "Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management" priority of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future. The Michigan Stream Team work will benefit all of the aquatic resources within Michigan by providing the correct data for managers to utilize when designing aquatic restoration projects.

2005 Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference

Submitted by Heather Rawlings
Fish and Wildlife Biologist



Biologists Susan Wells and Heather Rawlings attended the 2005 Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference held December 11-14 in Grand Rapids, MI. The theme for the conference was "Bridges to Understanding- Linking Multiple Perspectives", and was held in conjunction with the 9th Annual National Wild Turkey Symposium. A large range of topics were covered during the conference, however Wells and Rawlings focused on the habitat conservation/stream restoration related-papers. Because the conference was held in Michigan, the conference was dominated by Michigan agency personnel, and was an excellent networking opportunity for Alpena FRO staff.

Education about habitat restoration projects contribute toward the "Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management" component of the Service's Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Thunder Bay Project Implementation Working Committee Meeting

Submitted by Aaron Woldt
Fishery Biologist

Fishery Biologist Aaron Woldt participated in a Working Committee meeting for the Thunder Bay Power Company Thunder Bay River Project Implementation. The Working Committee was created to assist Thunder Bay Power (TBP) in meeting the requirements of its Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license. Biologist Woldt is the Service representative on the Working Committee.

The primary focus of the December 7, 2005 meeting was to discuss finalization of the sale of the Thunder Bay Power Projects to North American Hydro (NAH). NAH officially took over operation of the Thunder Bay River hydroelectric projects on July 30 and chose to retain the Thunder Bay Power name. Working Committee members met Scott Klabunde, NAH midwest plant operations manager, who will represent NAH at working committee meetings. Discussions also included the disposition of lands adjacent to Thunder Bay River hydroelectric projects that were not sold to NAH. Most of these lands were sold for development. Planned development at the Hubbard Lake site will cause a conflict with existing plans for a recreational fishing pier scheduled to be built in 2013 by TBP using funds from the settlement escrow account. The Working Committee listened to a proposal to relocate the proposed pier to the opposite side of the river with the developer absorbing all construction costs for the pier, foot path, and parking

lot to be constructed 7 years ahead of schedule in 2006. The Working Committee agreed to accept or decline the developer's proposal at its March 2006 meeting.

The Working Committee also discussed license article 409 pertaining to downstream fish passage and protection. Great Lakes Environmental Center (GLEC), a contractor retained by TBP, recently completed a draft downstream fish passage and protection evaluation including a "desktop" model/evaluation of existing fishery data as directed by the working group at its June 2005 meeting. The committee agreed to review the draft report within 30 days. NAH agreed to seek a filing extension from FERC, if necessary, to allow for the full 30 day review by MDNR and Service staff.

The meeting was attended by member representatives from Michigan DNR, NAH, and the Service. In addition representatives from the Hubbard Lake Sportsmen and Improvement Association, Montmorency Conservation District, Thunder Bay Audubon Society, and Northeast Michigan Council of Governments also participated.

Service involvement in the TBP Working Committee provides opportunities to minimize or mitigate the impacts of habitat alteration on fish and other aquatic species caused by hydropower facilities in the Thunder Bay River system. This outcome is consistent with the "Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management" priority of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Partnerships and Accountability

Service and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Biologists Collaborate on Lake Trout Broodstock Development

Submitted by James Boase
Fishery Biologist


Photo credit-D. Anderson

Fishery Biologist James Boase traveled to Parry Sound, Ontario on October 16, 2005 to assist Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) biologists with a fall lake trout spawning survey and gamete collection effort. This was the first of a three-year project leading to the development of a Parry Sound strain broodstock for use in U.S. waters of Lake Huron. Although the broodstock development effort was the principal focus of the project, additional objectives included:

1. Replenishment of the Parry Sound brood stock used in the OMNR hatchery program

2. Determine current thiamine levels in Parry Sound lake trout to continue monitoring efforts addressing lakewide Early Mortality Syndrome (EMS) research

3. Complete the disease screening of this free ranging Lake Huron lake trout stock to assist in clearing them for exportation to the U.S. and for addition to the OMNR hatchery system

Parry Sound strain lake trout are one of two remnant Lake Huron stocks and are recommended for expanded use in the lakewide rehabilitation plan. Lake trout in this region of Georgian Bay are considered rehabilitated and stocking was discontinued as the proportion of wild lake trout reached target levels. Age and growth data collected during this effort will aid in the continued monitoring of lake trout stocks in this region of the lake.

The target was to collect 50 wild lake trout families (one male and one female) and transfer those pairs back to a quarantine facility in Chatsworth, Ontario where they will be held until they are cleared for certifiable diseases. Plans were to collect gametes over the three week spawning period and over a wide geographic region of Parry Sound to enhance the genetic contribution. Boase assisted on the project October 16-22 and was followed by John Johnston from the Jordan River NFH who assisted October 23-29. Fish collection started out slow due to the abnormally warm fall weather but by weeks two and three, the capture of lake trout increased significantly and 68 pairs were ultimately collected. Trap nets were fished from the shoreline out into 3 - 6 meters of water at six locations within Parry Sound.

This collaborative effort provided an excellent opportunity to interact with biologists from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and to explain the Service's mission and efforts to manage fishery resources in the Great Lakes. Specifically, information was provided about the efforts of the Service and its partners to rehabilitate native lake trout populations in the Great Lakes and the role that the Fishery Resources Offices have in this endeavor. This effort supports the "Partnerships and Accountability" and "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management" priorities of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Service Reads Lake Trout CWTs for CORA and MDNR

Submitted by Adam Kowalski
Fish and Wildlife Biologist

During the month of December 2005, Fishery Biologist Adam Kowalski extracted and read 300 coded-wire-tags (CWTs) from lake trout collected from the Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority (CORA) and sport fishers. CWTs are microscopic metal tags placed in the snouts of juvenile lake trout at the hatchery. When extracted the tag number, when compared to stocking records, yields information such as stocking location, stocking date, fish age, fish strain, and hatchery of origin. CORA collected lake trout heads during its spring fishery independent lake whitefish survey and fall lake trout assessments. Sport-fishery caught lake trout heads are collected by Michigan DNR head hunters and creel clerks at boat launches around throughout Michigan.

This concludes CWT extraction for the 2005 field season. All CWTs extracted and read at the Alpena FRO will be entered in the Lake Huron Technical Committee common CWT database, which is shared among all contributing resource agencies.

Data collected from lake trout CWTs are used to determine harvest limits, stocking locations, movement patterns, and post stocking survival rates of various hatchery practices. These outcomes are consistent with the Service's goal of building and maintaining self-sustaining populations of native fish species while providing recreational fishing opportunities and meeting the needs of tribal communities under the "Partnerships and Accountability" and "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management" priorities of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Service Gives Talk on Sturgeon Tag Identification Database

Submitted by Adam Kowalski
Fish and Wildlife Biologist

On December 20, Fishery Biologist Adam Kowalski gave a presentation at the Michigan DNR lake sturgeon committee meeting about the newly constructed Great Lakes wide lake sturgeon tagging database. Kowalski explained that a grant for $11,000 was received from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust in 2004 to construct and maintain a database to house tag information such as tag type, tag number, tag location, and tagger contact information in 2004. Kowalski also updated the group on the current status of the database which contains over 10,000 PIT tags and over 100 external tag sequences and emphasized the need for everyone to send their data to him to be entered into the database for improved data sharing among lake sturgeon researchers. Kowalski also told the group that the database is housed at the Great Lakes Fishery Commissions web site and can be viewed at the following web address http://www.glfc.org/sturgeontag/index.htm.

This database will improve the information sharing process between agencies and the general public who may encounter tagged lake sturgeon. The multi-partner nature of this work is consistent with the Service's goal of establishing and maintaining open, interactive communication with its partner agencies under the "Partnerships and Accountability" priority of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Lake Sturgeon Research Presented at the Saginaw Field and Stream Club

Submitted by James Boase
Fishery Biologist

Fishery Biologist James Boase traveled to Saginaw, Michigan on November 10, 2005 to attend the Saginaw Field and Stream Club monthly meeting. Boase gave a PowerPoint presentation titled "Lake Sturgeon Recovery Efforts in the Saginaw River Watershed". The 30 minute presentation was attended by approximately 100 club members. Two main focal points were presented; current efforts to identify lake sturgeon spawning tributaries connecting to Lake Huron, and identifying and mitigating impediments to spawning success in the Saginaw River Watershed.

The primary impediments preventing lake sturgeon recovery in the Saginaw River Watershed are the limited number of lake sturgeon remaining in the watershed and blocked access to spawning substrates. These two impediments were highlighted in the presentation along with potential solutions to those problems. The presentation was well received by members of the group. The forum was an excellent opportunity for Boase to explain how the Alpena FRO is working with state and local governing bodies as well as private citizens in an effort to rehabilitate lake sturgeon populations throughout the Great lakes.

This presentation provided an excellent opportunity to explain to the public the Service's mission and efforts to restore native fish within the Great Lakes. Specifically, the presentation focused on efforts to rehabilitate lake sturgeon populations in tributaries connecting to Lake Huron. The benefits of native species restoration, and the detriments of exotic species were clearly defined and explained. This project is consistent with the "Partnerships and Accountability", "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management", and "Leadership in Science and Technology" focus areas of the Fisheries Program's Vision for the Future

Lake Sturgeon Research Presented to Frankenmuth Conservation Club

Submitted by James Boase
Fishery Biologist

Fishery Biologist James Boase traveled to Frankenmuth, Michigan on November 7, 2005 to attend the Frankenmuth Conservation Club monthly meeting. Boase gave a PowerPoint presentation describing the ongoing lake sturgeon rehabilitation program taking place in the

Saginaw River Watershed. Approximately 250 members were in attendance at the meeting and stayed for the presentation.

The informal presentation allowed the audience to participate throughout the talk by asking questions and sharing their encounters with lake sturgeon while fishing in the Saginaw River and Saginaw Bay. Questions focused on how lake sturgeon habitat rehabilitation would enhance the abundance of other species, interaction with exotic species, and health risks associated with the consumption of lake sturgeon. The forum was an excellent opportunity to explain how the Alpena FRO is working with other biologists, recreational anglers, and commercial fishers from both Canada and the US in efforts to better understand and enhance sturgeon populations throughout the Great lakes. In addition, the meeting provided an opportunity to interact with recreational anglers from mid-Michigan and explain the vital role they play in the rehabilitation of lake sturgeon.

The Frankenmuth Conservation Club is Michigan's oldest conservation club and has over 1,800 members. The club manages property adjacent to the Cass River where lake sturgeon research has been taking place since the spring of 2005. This is the second opportunity Alpena FRO staff have had to present at this club and has resulted in better communication between the two groups. Results of the improved communication have already paid off. During the 2005 spring sampling period, when lake sturgeon migrate into rivers to spawn, a lake sturgeon was spotted by a club member near a suspected spawning area within the Saginaw watershed. The member notified biologists from Alpena who then went to the location and officially documented lake sturgeon use of the system.

This presentation provided an excellent opportunity to explain to the public the Service's mission and efforts to restore native fish and control exotic species. Specifically, the presentation focused on efforts to rehabilitate lake sturgeon populations in tributaries connecting to Lake Huron. The benefits of native species restoration and the detriments of exotic species were clearly defined and explained. This project is consistent with the "Partnerships and Accountability", "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management", and "Leadership in Science and Technology" focus areas of the Fisheries Program's Vision for the Future.

Alpena FRO provides Technical Assistance to USGS

Submitted by Scott Koproski
Fishery Biologist

During the month of December, Fishery Biologist Scott Koproski was contacted by Chuck Madenjian of the USGS Great Lakes Science Center to assist with ageing burbot otoliths from lakes Michigan and Huron. Madenjian has been collecting burbot otoliths for four years to identify growth characteristics of Great Lakes burbot populations. Biologist Koproski has extensive experience ageing otoliths, and Madenjian provided samples to Koproski for analysis. Koproski used the crack and burn technique to identify annuli formation within 70 pairs of otoliths. This marks the fifth consecutive year that Koproski has been assisting USGS with burbot otolith analysis. Written results of this work should be available in the winter upon completion of data analysis.

This is another example of Alpena FRO's commitment to the following Fisheries Vision Priorities for "Partnerships and Accountability" and "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management".

Public Use

Alpena FRO discusses Detroit River Lake Sturgeon with Detroit News

Submitted by Jerry McClain
Fishery Biologist

On December 28, Project Leader McClain was interviewed by the Detroit News to gather information on lake sturgeon recovery efforts in the Detroit River. As part of a story of water quality issues in the Detroit River the reporter was looking for information on lake sturgeon habitat requirements and concerns in the system. McClain provided information on collaborative efforts in which the Alpena FRO is involved, particularly the pre- and post-construction fishery surveys associated with the newly constructed artificial reef near Belle Isle. In addition, McClain spoke with the reporter about the habitat alterations that have taken place in the Detroit River and the lack of remaining lake sturgeon spawning habitat in the system as an impediment to recovery of the species in this region of the Great Lakes.

Interest in the sturgeon side of the story was generated when the reporter had visited the Alpena FRO website and viewed information posted there regarding our lake sturgeon recovery efforts.

Media outreach is consistent with and contributes to the "*Public Use*" and "*Aquatic Species Conservation and Management*" priorities of the Service's Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

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December 2005

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alpena FRO
145 Water Street, Alpena, MI 49707

Phone: 989/356-5102

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